

CLALLAM CONSERVATION DISTRICT CONSERVATION PRACTICE COST-SHARE POLICY

PURPOSE

The Conservation Practice Cost-Share Program is an incentive program intended to defray landowner costs for implementing conservation practices that benefit water quality and wildlife habitat on private land. The goal of this program is to help landowners and land users (hereinafter referred to as Cooperators) practice better environmental stewardship by providing financial assistance for the implementation of conservation practices that only indirectly or marginally benefit them, thus would not otherwise be implemented or would not be performed to the extent needed without financial assistance.

The expectation of the Clallam Conservation District Board of Supervisors (hereinafter referred to as the District) is that Cooperators are responsible for the conservation of natural resources under their management. Thus, Cooperators should be actively engaged in the conservation planning process and contribute (financially or in kind) to conservation practice implementation. Long-term operation and maintenance of conservation practices is the responsibility of the Cooperator.

Cost-share funding administered by the District comes from a variety of Federal, State and local sources. Each funding source has specific requirements and restrictions related to the use of public funds on private land. To most efficiently and equitably distribute these funds, the District developed this uniform Cost-Share Policy. This policy is designed to comply with each of the various requirements and restrictions; however, depending on the specific source of funds, there may at times be exceptions to this policy that are more restrictive.

EXEMPTIONS TO THIS POLICY

Certain types of conservation and ecological restoration projects are exempt from this policy because either other policies supercede this policy or the nature and scale of the projects make them inappropriate for consideration under this policy. Although funding may come through the District, policies, procedures and evaluation criteria specific to such projects have been established by other agencies, including but limited to the Washington Conservation Commission. Examples of such projects include the following:

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) projects
- Irrigation Efficiencies Program (IEP) projects

In addition, large-scale projects initiated by or proposed for funding by the District or other agency or nonprofit organization, involving multiple properties, and that provide little or no direct benefits to the owners of the properties on which the projects will occur, are not governed by this policy. In such cases Cooperators generally do not apply for financial assistance; rather, the District typically initiates the project, including seeking funding, and solicits cooperation from the affected property owners.

COST-SHARE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND REIMBURSEMENT RATES

All property owners within Clallam Conservation District, except employees of the District, are eligible for cost sharing. Clallam Conservation District includes all of Clallam County including federal and tribal lands. All cost-share applicants must sign a *Cooperative Agreement between the Clallam Conservation District and Landowner* in order to be considered for cost sharing.

ELIGIBLE PRACTICES

All practices listed in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) are eligible practices for cost sharing. Alternative practices not listed in the FOTG may be considered as well. Typical practices are those that contribute to an improvement in water quality or habitat

for federal Endangered Species Act listed species. Cost sharing for the implementation of a conservation practice must result in public benefits that significantly outweigh private gains.

Eligible practices must be included as part of a comprehensive conservation plan for the property under consideration unless it is determined by the District that a conservation plan is either not necessary or the practice is of such high priority that it should be implemented without further delay. Both preventative practices and corrective practices are eligible; however, preference for funding will typically be given to practices that address an existing resource conservation problem over those that are preventative in nature.

INELIGIBLE PRACTICES

The following are not eligible for cost sharing:

- Practices required as a result of a court order;
- Practices required for compliance with local building permits (e.g. roof runoff management);
- Practices associated with required mitigation;
- Instream stock water facilities, unless it is determined that there are no other feasible alternatives.
- Wells that will be utilized as a source of potable water.

COST-SHARE RATES

Cost-share rates are determined in part by the relative landowner/public benefit and the location of the practice to be implemented. Practices located within streams or riparian areas that directly benefit water quality are eligible for up to 75 percent cost sharing. The relative landowner/public benefit is determined using the *Worksheet for Assigning Cost-Share Rates*. The total score calculated on the *Worksheet* shall correspond to the cost-share rate. The following maximum cost-share rates apply:

Cost-Share Rate		Type and Location of Practice
Single Funding Source	Multiple Funding Sources	
75%	100%	Instream habitat improvement/restoration practices and practices that have the primary purpose of benefiting water quality and riparian areas.
75%	100%	Practices associated with irrigation canals, laterals and ponds that have the primary purpose of improving water quality in natural downstream water bodies.
50%	50%	Upland practices that indirectly benefit water quality and/or riparian habitat.

Common upland practices include animal waste storage facilities, roof runoff management structures and heavy use area protection. Maximum cost-share rates approved by the Washington Conservation Commission shall not be exceeded by the District. Such rates may be found in the Conservation Commission Procedure Manual.

Cooperators shall, to the best of their ability, contribute their share of practice implementation costs. Cooperator contributions can be in the form of purchased materials and services, equipment rental, or donated equipment use, materials, and labor. The value of donated materials and equipment use will be based on Farm Service Agency (FSA) approved rates or equal to local retail prices for comparable materials and equipment. The value that can be claimed for donated labor varies depending on the funding source. If a proposed practice is identified as a high priority for cost sharing and a unique situation exists that precludes a Cooperator from contributing a sufficient share, the District will work with the Cooperator to help secure their necessary share from other sources.

Practice reimbursement rates are based on actual cost not to exceed predetermined maximum costs. Two options are available for determining practice maximum reimbursement rates:

1. Current NRCS Washington State Westside Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Cost List
2. Low Bid, based on a minimum of three written bids

The District will prepare a cost estimate for the practice. This cost estimate serves as the maximum cost and is included in the *Cost-Share Agreement* that is entered into by the District and the Cooperator. The maximum cost can

only be exceeded by providing proof that the cost estimate is inaccurate. The most acceptable way to provide proof is with written bids.

Practice implementation costs will be reviewed by the District annually to develop more accurate local costs. These local data will be utilized to update the NRCS EQIP Cost List.

COST-SHARE LIMIT

The maximum amount of cost share a Cooperator is eligible to receive is \$25,000 per calendar year. Furthermore, the total amount of cost-share funds expended by the District to implement practices on a particular property (or combination of properties that constitute a single operation) over a time span exceeding one calendar year shall not exceed \$25,000 if the funds originate from a single grant source. However, if more than one grant source is used to fund practice implementation and the project spans more than one calendar year, up to \$25,000 in cost share may be expended per year, per grant source.

COST-SHARE APPROVAL PROCESS

Each cost-share application will be evaluated using the *Worksheet for Assigning Cost-Share Rates*. This worksheet establishes a numeric score that equates to the cost-share rate. District staff will assist with conservation plan preparation, conservation practice design, and application preparation. Applications shall be reviewed and signed by the applicant and submitted to District staff.

The Board of Supervisors will make final cost-share award decisions. Staff members reviewing the applications shall include but not be limited to the District Manager, Planners/Technicians, and if available, a representative of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In rare cases when cost-share funding timelines require an expedited process in order to implement practices prior to funding expiration dates, cost-share award decisions may be made by the District staff with written approval from a minimum of three Supervisors.

All Clallam Conservation District Board of Supervisor meetings are open public meetings and the public is encouraged to attend. Cost-share applicants in particular are encouraged to attend the Board meetings in which their applications are being reviewed in order to respond to questions pertinent to their applications.

Applicants will be notified in writing of the status of their application. If awarded cost-share funds, such written notification shall also serve as authorization for the Cooperator to begin practice implementation. Any costs incurred prior to written approval are not eligible for reimbursement.

It is the responsibility of the cost-share recipient to submit appropriate documentation of expenses. Such expenses may include purchased or contributed materials, and contracted or donated equipment and labor costs. Original receipts are required.

OTHER PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

Efforts will be made to publicize the availability of cost-share funds in *Conservation News*, the quarterly newsletter of the Clallam Conservation District, and in local newspapers.

No consideration of race, gender, religion, political affiliation, or working or volunteer positions will be made during the application process.